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U.S. Department of Transportation
United States Coast Guard

Federal Requirements for Recreational Boats

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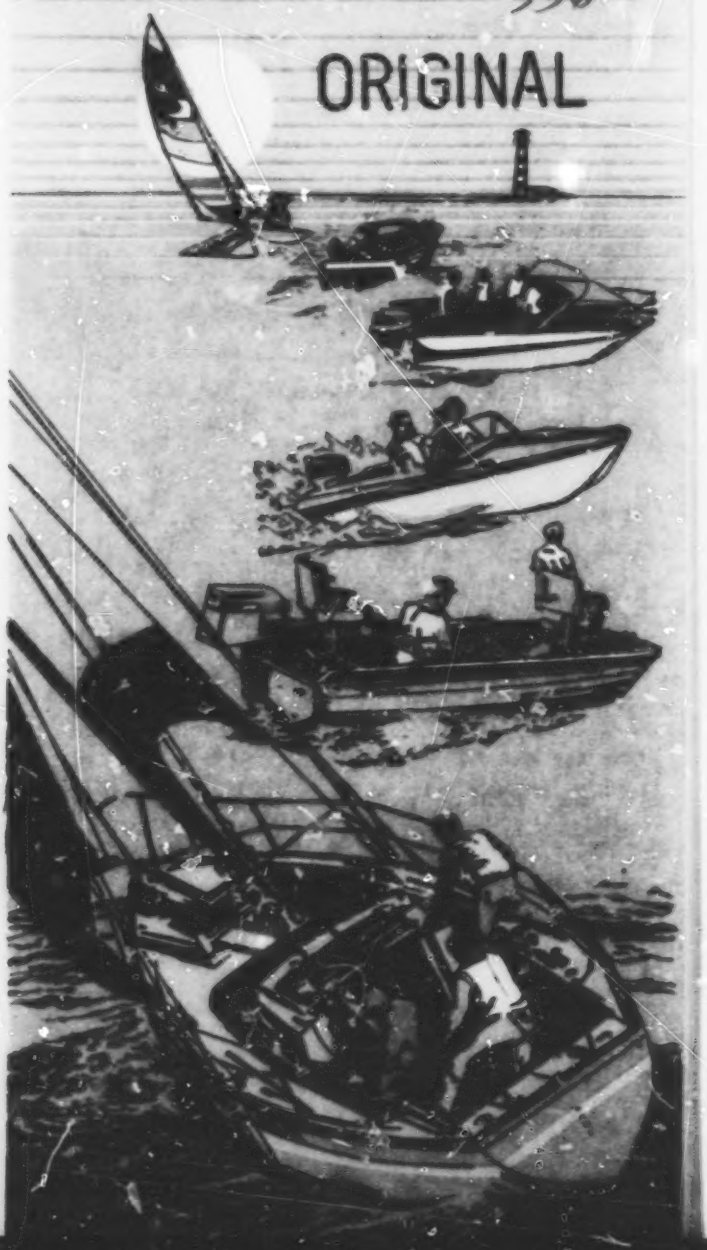


FLOAT PLAN

Complete this page, before going boating and leave it with a reliable person who can be depended upon to notify the Coast Guard, or other rescue organization, should you not return as scheduled. Do not file this plan with the Coast Guard.

1. NAME OF PERSON REPORTING AND TELEPHONE NUMBER
2. DESCRIPTION OF BOAT. TYPE _____ COLOR _____
   TRIM _____ REGISTRATION NO. _____
   LENGTH _____ NAME _____ MAKE _____
   OTHER INFO _____
3. PERSONS ABOARD _____

NAME	AGE	ADDRESS & TELE. NO.
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

4. ENGINE TYPE _____ H.P. _____
   NO. OF ENGINES _____ FUEL CAPACITY _____
5. SURVIVAL EQUIPMENT: (CHECK AS APPROPRIATE)
   PFDs _____ FLARES _____ MIRROR _____
   SMOKE SIGNALS _____ FLASHLIGHT _____ FOOD _____
   PADDLES _____ WATER _____ OTHERS _____
   ANCHOR _____ RAFT OR DINGHY _____ EPIRB _____
6. RADIO YES/NO TYPE _____ FREQS. _____
7. TRIP EXPECTATIONS: LEAVE AT _____ (TIME)
   FROM _____ GOING TO _____
   EXPECT TO RETURN BY _____ (TIME) AND IN
   NO EVENT LATER THAN _____
8. ANY OTHER PERTINENT INFO _____
9. AUTOMOBILE LICENSE _____ TYPE _____
   TRAILER LICENSE _____ COLOR AND MAKE OF
   AUTO _____
   WHERE PARKED _____
10. IF NOT RETURNED BY _____ (TIME) CALL THE
    COAST GUARD, OR _____ (LOCAL AUTHORITY)
    TELEPHONE NUMBERS _____
    _____
    _____
    _____

NUMBERING REQUIREMENTS

All undocumented vessels equipped with propulsion machinery must be numbered in the state of principal use. Since some states require the numbering of vessels not equipped with propulsion machinery, check with your local state boating officials for numbering requirements. An undocumented vessel used principally on the high seas must be numbered by the state in which it is principally used when not on the high seas. The U.S. Coast Guard issues the certificate of number for New Hampshire, Washington, Alaska, The Northern Marianas Islands, and American Samoa.

Certificate of Number

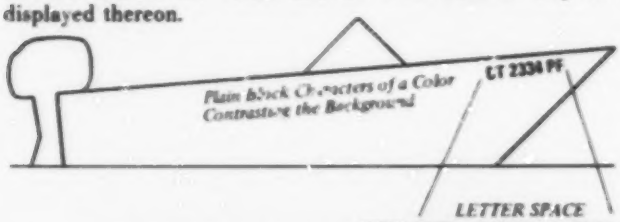
A valid certificate of number showing the numbers issued to a vessel must be on board whenever the vessel is in use. When a vessel is removed to a new state of principal use, the issuing authority of that state shall recognize the validity of a number awarded by any other issuing authority for a period of at least 60 days before requiring numbering in the new state.

Validation Stickers

With each certificate of number issued by the U.S. Coast Guard, two color coded validation stickers are also issued. The validation sticker must be displayed within 6 inches of the number.

Display of Number

Must be painted or permanently attached to each side of the forward half of the vessel and no other number may be displayed thereon.



LETTER SPACE

Be NOT LESS than 3 inches in Height **CT 2334 PF**

Yacht Documentation

The documentation of a vessel as a yacht will not exempt it from any applicable state or federal taxes. Further the fact that your yacht is documented will not excuse you from complying with safety and equipment regulations of the Federal Government, state or states in which the vessel is used.

Notification of Changes Required

When a vessel is lost, destroyed, abandoned, stolen, recovered, or transferred, the person whose name appears on the certificate of number as the owner shall within 15 days notify the authority which numbered the vessel.

If the certificate of number is lost or destroyed, or the owner's address changes, the owner shall notify the issuing authority within 15 days.

A person whose name appears as the owner of a vessel on a certificate of number shall surrender the certificate in the manner prescribed by the issuing authority within 15 days after it becomes invalid for any reason.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

U.S. Coast Guard vessels are identified by a distinctive stripe, the words *Coast Guard* on the side of the vessel, the Coast Guard Ensign, and uniformed personnel. Coast Guard law enforcement personnel may also be found aboard other vessels displaying the Coast Guard Ensign and will normally carry sidearms or other firearms in the performance of their duties.

A vessel underway, upon being hailed by a Coast Guard vessel or patrol boat, is required to stop immediately and lay to, or maneuver in such a way as to permit the boarding officer to come aboard.

A civil penalty up to $500 may be imposed by the Coast Guard for failure to: comply with numbering requirements, equipment requirements, report a boating accident, or to comply with some other Federal regulations. Failure to comply with the unified Inland Rules of the Road (Inland Navigation Rules Act of 1980) can result in a civil penalty up to $5,000.

NEGLIGENT OR GROSSLY NEGLIGENT OPERATION of a vessel which endangers life, limb, or property is prohibited by law. A civil penalty may be imposed by the Coast Guard for NEGLIGENT OPERATION.

For the criminal offense of GROSSLY NEGLIGENT OPERATION, an operator may be subjected to a fine up to $1,000, imprisonment of not more than 1 year, or both.

Some examples of actions that may constitute negligent or grossly negligent operation under certain circumstances are:

a. Operating in swimming areas

b. Operating while under the influence of alcohol or drugs and recognizable by erratic operation

c. Excessive speed in the vicinity of other boats, or in dangerous waters

d. Hazardous water skiing practices

e. Operating in clearly dangerous areas

f. Bow, seatback, gunwale, or transom riding

Termination of Use

A Coast Guard boarding officer who observes a boat operating in an UNSAFE CONDITION, specifically defined by law or regulation, and determines that an ESPECIALLY HAZARDOUS CONDITION exists, may direct the operator to take immediate steps to correct the condition, including returning to mooring. The specific unsafe conditions for which termination may be imposed are:

a. Insufficient number of Person Flotation Devices (PFDs)

b. Insufficient firefighting devices

c. Overloaded condition

d. Improper navigation light display

e. Fuel leakage

f. Fuel in the bilges

g. Improper ventilation

h. Improper backfire flame control

i. Hazardous bars (C.G. District 13 only)

j. Manifestly unsafe voyage

An operator who refuses to comply with the order to terminate unsafe use of the boat, can be cited for failure to comply with the directions of a Coast Guard boarding officer, as well as for the specific statutory or regulatory violations or provisions which were the basis for the termination order.

COAST GUARD APPROVED EQUIPMENT

"Coast Guard approved equipment" is equipment which has been approved by the Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard and has been determined to be in compliance with U.S. Coast Guard specifications and regulations relating to the materials, construction and performance of such equipment.

Flame Arresters

(Backfire Flame Control)

Gasoline engines installed in a motorboat or motor vessel after April 25, 1940, except outboard motors, must have a U.S. Coast Guard approved flame arrester fitted to the carburetor. For exceptions (See 46 CFR 25.35).

Sound Signaling Appliances for Vessels Less Than 20 Meters (65'6")

1. A vessel of 12 meters (39'4") or more in length but less than 20 meters (65'6") shall be provided with a whistle and a bell. The whistle and the bell shall comply with the specifications listed in Annex 3 of the Inland Navigational Rules Act of 1980.

2. A vessel of less than 12 meters (39'4") in length shall not be obliged to carry the sound signaling appliances prescribed above, but if she does not, she shall be provided with some other means of making an efficient sound signal.

Note: The technical details for sound signal appliances prescribed in Annex 3 are exempt until Dec. 24, 1989. Vessels must carry sound signaling appliances as provided in paragraphs 1 or 2.

Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs)

Personal Flotation Devices must be Coast Guard approved and are classified by "Type" according to performance.

Type I—

A Type I PFD has the greatest required buoyancy and is designed to turn most UNCONSCIOUS persons in the water from a face down position to a vertical or slightly backward position. The adult size device provides a minimum buoyancy of 22 pounds and the child size provides a minimum buoyancy of 11 pounds. The Type I PFD provides the

greatest protection to its wearer. The Type I is most effective for all waters, especially offshore and ocean cruising, when there is probability of a delayed rescue.

Type II—

A Type II PFD is any approved wearable device designed to turn its wearer in a vertical or slightly backward position in the water. The turning action is not as pronounced as with a Type I, and the device will not turn as many persons under the same conditions as the Type I. An adult size device provides a minimum buoyancy of 15½ pounds, the medium child size provides a minimum of 11 pounds, and the infant and small child sizes provide a minimum buoyancy of 7 pounds.

Type III—

A Type III PFD is any approved wearable device designed so the wearers can place themselves in a vertical or slightly backward position. While the Type III has the same buoyancy as the Type II PFD, it has a little or no turning ability. A Type III PFD comes in a variety of styles, colors, and sizes. Many are designed to be particularly useful when water skiing, sailing, hunting, fishing or engaging in other water sports. Several of this type will also provide increased hypothermia protection.

Type IV—

A Type IV PFD is any approved device designed to be thrown to a person in the water and grasped and held by the user until rescued. It is *not* designed to be worn. The most common Type IV devices are a buoyant cushion and a ring buoy.

Type V—

A Type V PFD is any PFD approved for restricted use.

All PFDs that are presently acceptable on recreational boats fall into one of these designations. All PFDs shall be U.S. Coast Guard approved, in good and serviceable condition, and of an appropriate size for the persons who intend to wear them. Wearable PFDs shall be readily accessible and throwable devices shall be immediately available for use.

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

Each fire extinguisher is classified by letter and roman numeral according to the type of fire it may be expected to extinguish, and the size of the extinguisher. The "letter" indicates the TYPE OF FIRE:

A—Fires of ordinary combustible materials.

B—Gasoline, oil and grease fires.

C—Electrical fires.

Extinguishers approved for motorboats are hand-portable, of either B-I or B-II classification.

Coast Guard Classes	U.L. Listing	FOAM (gallons)	CARBON DIOXIDE (pounds)	DRY CHEMICAL (pounds)	HALON (pounds)
B-I	5B	1¼	4	2	2½
B-II	6B	2½	15	10	—

Fire extinguishers must be carried on ALL motorboats that have one or more of the following conditions which make the boat of closed construction:

1. Inboard engines,

2. Closed compartments under thwarts and seats wherein portable fuel tanks may be stored,

3. Double bottoms not sealed to the hull or which are not completely filled with flotation materials,

4. Closed living spaces,

5. Closed stowage compartments in which combustible or flammable material is stored, or

6. Permanently installed fuel tanks.

Dry chemical fire extinguishers without gauges or indicating devices must be weighed and tagged every 6 months. If the gross weight of a carbon dioxide (CO_2) fire extinguisher is reduced by more than 10% of the net weight, the extinguisher is not acceptable and must be recharged.

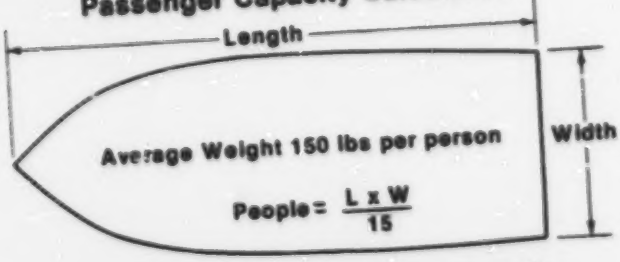
Check extinguishers regularly to be sure that gauges are free and nozzle is clear.

NOTE: READ LABELS ON FIRE EXTINGUISHERS IF THE EXTINGUISHER IS U.L. LISTED, IT IS APPROVED FOR MARINE USE.

LOADING YOUR BOAT

There are several things that should be remembered when loading a boat: distribute the load evenly; keep the load low; don't stand up in a small boat; don't overload; and consult the "U.S. Coast Guard Capacity Information Plate". On boats with no capacity plate, use the following formula to determine the number of persons that you can safely carry in *good weather* conditions:

Passenger Capacity Calculation



Measuring Your Boat For Length

For determining the length of a vessel, the distance is measured in a straight line from the foremost part of the vessel to the aftermost part of the vessel, parallel to the centerline, exclusive of sheer.

Bowsprits, bumpkins, rudders, outboard motors, brackets, and similar fittings or attachments are not included in the measurement.

MINIMUM REQUIRED EQUIPMENT BY LENGTH OF BOAT

1. Less Than 16 Feet In Length:

BACK-FIRE FLAME ARRESTER—One approved device on each carburetor of all gasoline engines EXCEPT OUTBOARD MOTORS. See page 5.

NUMBERING—See page 3.

VENTILATION—For boats built after April 25, 1940, and before August 1, 1980 (with engines using gasoline as fuel and other fuels having a flashpoint of 110° F. or less) the following is required:

> At least two ventilation ducts fitted with cowls or their equivalent for the purpose of properly and efficiently ventilating the bilges of every engine and fuel tank compartment. There shall be at least one exhaust duct installed so as to extend to the lower portion of the bilge and at least one intake duct installed so as to extend to a point at least midway to the bilge or at least below the level of the carburetor air intake.

For boats which are built after July 31, 1978 but prior to August 1, 1980, the requirement for ventilation of the fuel tank compartment can be omitted if there is no electrical source of ignition in the fuel tank compartment and if the fuel tank vents to the outside of the boat. After August 1, 1980, all boats with gasoline engines must be built with ventilation systems which comply with Coast Guard standards. The operator is required to keep the system in operating condition.

PFD—Type I, II, III, IV or V for each person aboard—See NOTE on page 9.

FIRE EXTINGUISHER/PORTABLE—When NO *fixed* fire extinguishing system is installed in machinery space(s), at least one B-I type approved hand portable fire extinguisher. (NOT REQUIRED on outboard motorboats less than 26 feet in length if the construction of such motorboats will not permit the entrapment of explosive or flammable gases or vapors.) When an approved fixed fire extinguishing system is installed in machinery space(s), no B-I type extinguisher is required.

POLLUTION PREVENTION—See "Water Pollution and The Recreational Boater", page 14.

VISUAL DISTRESS SIGNALS—See page 15.

2. 16 Feet To Less Than 26 Feet In Length:

BACK-FIRE FLAME ARRESTER—Same requirements as Section 1.

NUMBERING—See page 3.

VENTILATION—Same requirements as Section 1.

PFD—Type I, II, III, or V for each person on board and one Type IV—See NOTE below.

FIRE EXTINGUISHER/PORTABLE—Same requirements as Section 1.

POLLUTION PREVENTION—See page 14.

VISUAL DISTRESS SIGNALS—See page 15.

3. 26 Feet To Less Than 40 Feet In Length:

BACK-FIRE FLAME ARRESTER—Same requirements as Section 1.

NUMBERING—See page 3.

VENTILATION—Same requirements as Section 1.

PFD—Type I, II,III, or V for each person on board and one Type IV—See NOTE below.

FIRE EXTINGUISHER/PORTABLE—At least two B-I type approved portable fire extinguishers; or at least one B-II type approved portable fire extinguisher. When an approved fixed system is installed, one less B-I type is required.

POLLUTION PREVENTION—See page 14.

VISUAL DISTRESS SIGNALS—See page 15.

4. 40 Feet To Not More Than 65 Feet In Length:

BACK-FIRE FLAME ARRESTER—Same requirements as Section 1.

NUMBERING—See page 3.

VENTILATION—Same requirements as Section 1.

PFD—Type I, II, III or IV for each person on board and one Type IV—See NOTE below.

FIRE EXTINGUISHER/PORTABLE—At least three B-I type approved portable fire extinguishers; OR at least one B-I type PLUS one B-II type approved portable fire extinguisher. When an approved fixed system is installed, one less B-I type is required.

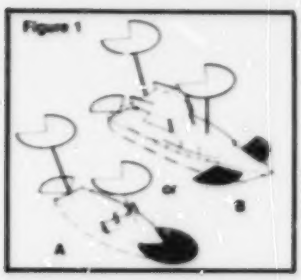
POLLUTION PREVENTION—See page 14.

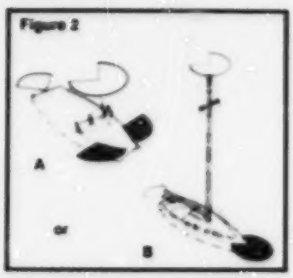
VISUAL DISTRESS SIGNALS—See page 15.

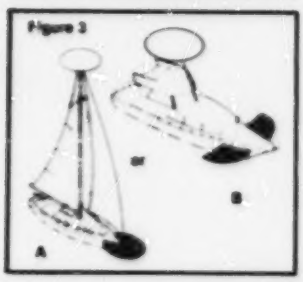
Note: Canoes and Kayaks are required to carry one PFD of any type for each person on board regardless of length. A Type V PFD may be carried in lieu of any PFD, but only if that Type V PFD is approved for that activity in which the recreational boat is being used.

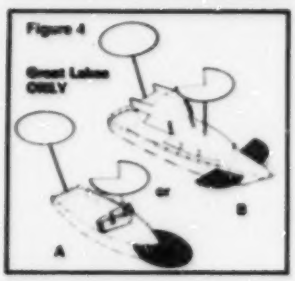
Lights Required on Boats

Power-Driven Vessels









International

1. A power-driven vessel **less than 20 meters (65'6")**, shall exhibit navigation lights as shown in either Figure One or Two. If you choose Figure One the aft masthead light must be higher than the forward one, if Figure Two is selected, a vessel **less than 12 meters (39"4")**, the masthead light must be 1 meter **(3'3")**, higher than the colored lights. If the vessel is **12 meters (39'4"), or more in length and less than 20 meters (65'8")** the masthead light must be 2.5 meters (8'2") higher than the gunwhale.

2. A power-driven vessel **less than 7 meters (22'10") in length** and whose maximum speed cannot exceed **7 knots** may in lieu of the lights prescribed above exhibit an all-round white light. Such vessel shall, if practicable also exhibit side lights.

3. A power-driven vessel when operating on the **Great Lakes** may carry an all-round white light, as displayed in Figure Four, in lieu of the second masthead light as shown in Figure One.

Inland

1. A power-driven vessel, when the construction was started before Dec. 25, 1981, **less than 20 meters (65'6")** shall exhibit navigation lights as displayed in either Figures One, Two or Three.

2. A power-driven vessel, when the construction was started after Dec. 24, 1981, **12 meters (39'4") or more in length and less than 20 meters (65'6")** shall exhibit navigation lights as displayed in either Figures One or Two.

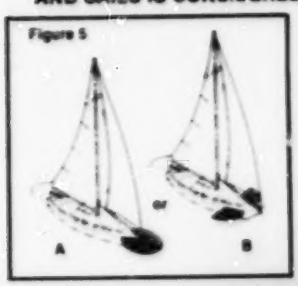
3. A power-driven vessel, when the construction was started after Dec. 24, 1981, **less than 12 meters (39'4")** may exhibit those lights shown in Figures One, Two, or Three.

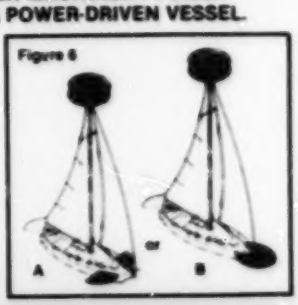
4. A power-driven vessel when operating on the **Great Lakes** may carry an all-round white light, as displayed in Figure Four, in lieu of the second masthead light as shown in Figure One.

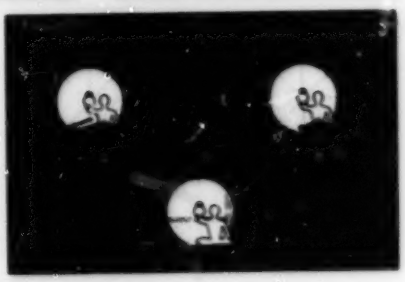
Between Sunset and Sunrise

Sailing Vessels & Vessels Under Oars

NOTE: A SAIL VESSEL UNDER MACHINERY POWER AND SAILS IS CONSIDERED A POWER-DRIVEN VESSEL.







International

1. A sailing vessel of **less than 12 meters (39'4") in length** shall exhibit navigation lights shown in either Figures Five, Six, or Seven.

2. A sailing vessel of **12 meters (39'4") or more in length** shall exhibit navigation lights shown in either Figure Five or Six.

3. A sailing vessel of **less than 7 meters (22'10") in length** shall, if practicable, exhibit those lights prescribed for sailing vessels **less than 12 meters,** but if she does not, she shall have ready at hand an electric torch or lighted lantern showing a white light which shall be exhibited in sufficient time to prevent collision. (See Figure Eight)

4. **A vessel under oars** may display those lights prescribed for sailing vessels, but if she does not, she shall have ready at hand an electric torch or lighted lantern showing a white light which shall be exhibited in sufficient time to prevent collision. (See Figure Eight)

Inland

1. A sailing vessel, **under sail alone,** shall exhibit navigation lights as displayed in either Figures Five, Six, or Seven.

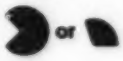
2. A sailing vessel of **less than 7 meters (22'10")** shall, if practicable, exhibit the lights prescribed in number 1 of this section, but if she does not, she shall have ready at hand an electric torch or lighted lantern showing a white light which shall be exhibited in sufficient time to prevent collision. (See Figure Eight)

3. **A vessel under oars** may exhibit the lights prescribed in this section for sailing vessels, but if she does not, she shall have ready at hand an electric torch or lighted lantern showing a white light which shall be exhibited in sufficient time to prevent collision. (See Figure Eight)

Range and Degree of Visibility of Lights

Inland and International

Less Than 12 Meters/12 Meters or More but Less Than 20 Meters

	Location	Visible Range	Degrees
	Masthead light	2/3	225/225
	All-round light	2/2	360/360
	Side lights	1/2	112.5/112.5
	Stern light	2/2	135/135

Lights Used When Anchored

International

Power-driven vessels and sailing vessels **less than 20 meters in length** at anchor must display anchor lights. Vessels **less than 7 meters in length** shall not be required to display anchor lights unless anchored in or near a narrow channel, fairway or anchorage, or where other vessels normally navigate. An anchor light is a white light exhibited forward, visible **for 2 miles** displayed where it can best be seen.

Inland

Power-driven vessels and sailing vessels **less than 20 meters in length** at anchor must display anchor lights. Vessels **less than 7 meters in length** shall not be required to display anchor lights unless anchored in or near a narrow channel, fairway or anchorage, or where other vessels normally navigate. An anchor light is a white light exhibited forward visible **for 2 miles** displayed where it can best be seen. A vessel **less than 20 meters** in inland waters **when at anchor in a special anchorage area** designated by the Secretary of Transportation, shall not be required to exhibit an anchor light.

BOATING ACCIDENT REPORTS

When as a result of an accident that involves a recreational boat, its equipment or any vessel required to be numbered, a person dies within 24 hours, disappears from a vessel under the circumstances that indicate death or injury, or is injured and receives medical treatment beyond first aid, the operator shall notify the nearest State boating authority within 48 hours of:

a. The date, time, and exact location of the occurrence.

b. The name of each person who died, disappeared, or was injured.

c. The number and name of the vessel.

d. The names and addresses of the owner and operator.

(If the operator cannot give this notice, each person on board shall notify that authority, or determine that the notice has been given.)

Accidents involving only property or equipment damage must be reported with 10 days if the damage is in excess of $200. Some States require reporting of accidents with property damage less than $200, or total boat loss.

WATER POLLUTION AND THE RECREATIONAL BOATER

The Refuse Act of 1899 prohibits the throwing, discharging, or depositing of any refuse matter of any kind (including trash, garbage, oil, and other liquid pollutants) into the waters of the United States to a distance of three miles from the coastline. The Federal Water Pollution Control Act, as amended, prohibits the discharge of oil or hazardous substances in quantities which may be harmful into U.S. navigable waters, the contiguous zone, and waters within 200 miles in some cases. You must immediately notify the U.S. Coast Guard if your vessel or facility discharges oil or hazardous substances into the water. Call toll free 800-424-8802, (In D.C. 426-2675). Federal regulations issued under the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, as amended, require that:

(1) No person may operate a vessel of less than 100 gross tons unless it has a fixed or portable means to discharge oily bilge slops to a reception facility. A bucket or bailer is considered a portable means. (See 33 CFR 155.360).

(2) Vessels 26 feet in length and over must have posted a placard at least 5 by 8 inches, made of durable material, fixed in a conspicuous place in the machinery spaces, or at the bilge and ballast pump control station, stating the following:

DISCHARGE OF OIL PROHIBITED

The Federal Water Pollution Control Act prohibits the discharge of oil or oily waste into or upon the navigable waters of the United States or the waters of the contiguous zone if such discharge causes a film or sheen upon, or discoloration of, the surface of the water, or causes a sludge or emulsion beneath the surface of the water. Violators are subject to a penalty of $5,000.

(See 33 CFR 155.440).

(3) No person may intentionally drain oil or oily waste from any source into the bilge of any vessel. See 33 CFR 155. 770.

You must also help to ensure that others obey the law. You are encouraged to report polluting discharges which you observe to the nearest U.S. Coast Guard office or call toll free 800-424-8802, (In DC 426-2675). Report the following information:

a. location
b. source
c. size
d. color
e. substance
f. time observed

Do not attempt to take samples of any chemical discharge. If uncertain as to the identity of any discharge, avoid flame, physical contact, or inhalation of fumes.

Marine Sanitation Devices (MSDs)

All recreational boats with installed toilet facilities must have an installed, operable marine sanitation device. Boats 65 feet in length and under may use a Type I, II, or III MSD. Boats over 65 feet are limited to installing Type II or III MSDs. All installed MSDs must be Coast Guard certified if the boat is to be in compliance. Coast Guard certified devices are so labeled except for some holding tanks which are automatically certified under the regulations if they store only sewage and flushwater at ambient air pressure and temperature.

Visual Distress Signals
The Regulation

The requirement to carry visual distress signals, became effective on January 1, 1981. This regulation requires all recreational boats when used on coastal waters, which includes the Great Lakes, the territorial seas and those waters directly connected to the Great Lakes and the territorial seas, up to a point where the waters are less than two miles wide, and boats owned in the United States when operating on the high seas to be equipped with visual distress signals.

The only exceptions are during daytime (sunrise to sunset) for:

- Recreational boats less than 16 feet in length.
- Boats participating in organized events such as races, regattas or marine parades.
- Open sailboats not equipped with propulsion machinery and less than 26 feet in length.
- Manually propelled boats.

These boats only need to carry night signals when used on these waters at night.

"PYROTECHNIC VISUAL DISTRESS SIGNALING DEVICES" must be Coast Guard approved, in serviceable condition and stowed to be readily accessible. If they are marked with a date showing the serviceable life, this date must not have passed. Launchers, produced before Jan. 1, 1981, intended for use with approved signals are not required to be Coast Guard Approved.

USCG Approved Pyrotechnic Visual Distress Signals and Associated Devices include:

- Pyrotechnic red flares, hand held or aerial.
- Pyrotechnic orange smoke, hand held or floating.
- Launchers for aerial red meteors or parachute flares.

"NON—PYROTECHNIC VISUAL DISTRESS SIGNALING DEVICES" must carry the manufacturer's certification that they meet Coast Guard requirements. They must be in serviceable condition and stowed to be readily accessible.

This group includes:

- Orange distress flag.
- Electric distress light.

No single signaling device is ideal under all conditions and for all purposes. Consideration should therefore be given to carrying several types. For example, an aerial flare can be seen over a long distance on a clear night, but for closer work, a hand-held flare may be more useful.

Visual Distress Signals Handling and Storage

Pyrotechnic devices should be stored in a cool, dry location and must be readily accessible in case of an emergency. Care should be taken to prevent puncturing or otherwise damaging their coverings. A watertight container, such as a surplus ammunition box, painted red or orange and prominently marked "DISTRESS SIGNALS" is recommended.

If young children are frequently aboard your boat, careful selection and proper stowage of visual distress signals become especially important. If you elect to carry pyrotechnic devices, you should select those in tough packaging and not easy to ignite should the devices fall into the hands of children.

Coast Guard approved pyrotechnic devices carry an expiration date. This date can not exceed 42 months from the date of manufacture and at such time the device can no longer be counted toward the minimum requirements.

Visual Distress Signals Types

A wide variety of signaling devices, both pyrotechnic and non-pyrotechnic, can be carried to meet the requirements of the regulation.

Boats less than 16' operating in coastal waters, and certain other exempted boats listed on page 14, need only carry night signaling devices when operated at night. All other recreational boats must carry both night and day signaling devices.

Note: If pyrotechnic devices are selected, a minimum of three must be carried. Any combination can be carried as long as they add up to three signals for day use and three signals for night use. Three day/night signaling devices meet both requirements.

The following is an illustration of the variety and combinations of devices which can be carried in order to meet the requirements:

1. Three hand-held red flares (day and night).
2. One electric distress light (night).

3. One hand-held red flare and two parachute flares (day and night).

4. One hand-held orange smoke signal, two floating orange smoke signals (day) and one electric distress light (day and night).

NUMBER MARKED ON DEVICE	DEVICE DESCRIPTION
	DAY USE ONLY
160.022	Floating Orange Smoke Distress Signals (5 minutes)
160.037	Hand Held Orange Smoke Distress Signals
160.057	Floating Orange Smoke Distress Signals (15 minutes
160.072	Orange Distress Signal Flag for Boats
	NIGHT USE ONLY
161.013	Electric Distress Light for Boats
	DAY AND NIGHT USE
160.021	Hand Red Flare Distress Signal (These signals must have a date of October 1, 1980 or later to be acceptable.
160.024	Parachute Red Flare Distress Signals (37mm) (These signals require use in combination with a suitable launching device.
160.036	Hand Held Rocket-Propelled Parachute Red Flare Distress Signals.
160.066	Distress Signal for Boats, Red Aerial Pyrotechnic Flare (These devices may be either meteor or parachute assisted type.) Some of these signals may require use in combination with a suitable launching device.

Warning . . .

In some states the launchers for meteors and parachute flares may be considered a firearm. Therefore, check with your state authorities before acquiring such launcher.

All distress signaling devices have both advantages and disadvantages. The most popular, because of cost, are probably the smaller pyrotechnic devices. Pyrotechnics make excellent distress signals, universally recognized as such, but they have the drawback that they can be used only once. Additionally, there is a potential for both injury and property damage if not properly handled. Pyrotechnics devices have a very hot flame and the ash and slag can cause burns and ignite materials that burn easily. Projected devices, such as pistol launched and hand-held parachute flares and meteors, have many of the same characteristics of a firearm and must be handled with the same caution and respect.

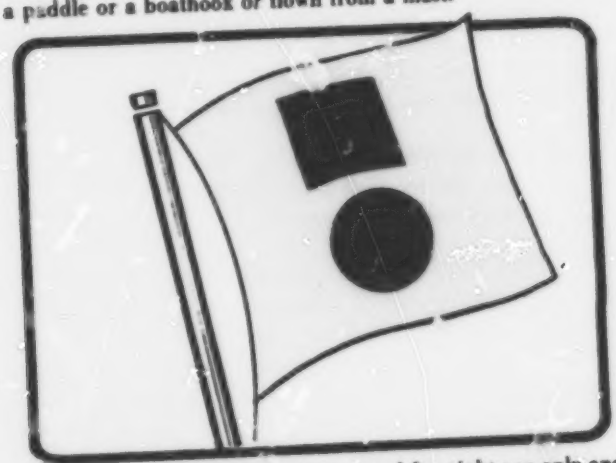
The Regulation States:

"No person in a boat shall display a visual distress signal on water to which this subpart applies under any circumstances except a situation where assistance is needed because of immediate or potential danger to the persons aboard."

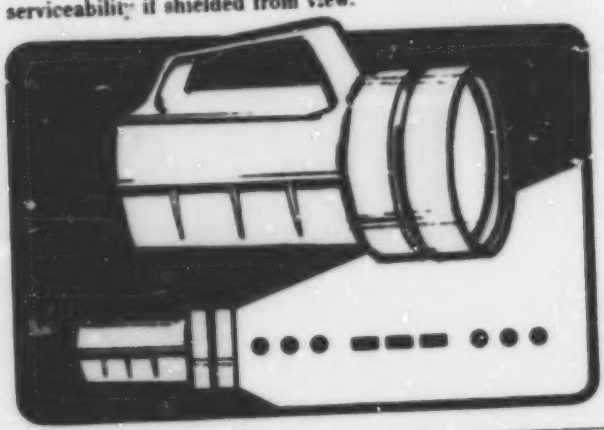
The hand-held and the floating orange smoke signaling devices are good day signals, especially on clear days. Both signals are most effective with light to moderate winds because higher winds tend to keep the smoke close to the water and disperse it which makes it hard to see.

Red hand-held flares can be used by day, but are most effective at night or in restricted visibility such as fog or haze. Only hand-held flares made after 1 October 1980 will be approved by the Coast Guard for use on recreational boats. When selecting such flares look for the Coast Guard approval number and date of manufacture. Make sure that the device does not carry the markings: "Not approved for use on recreational boats."

The distress flag must be at least 3 x 3 feet with a black square and ball on an orange background. It is accepted as a day signal only and is especially effective in bright sunlight. The flag is most distinctive when waved on something such as a paddle or a boathook or flown from a mast.



The electric distress light is accepted for night use only and must automatically flash the international SOS distress signal, which is (. . . — — — . . .). Flashed four to six times each minute, this is an unmistakable distress signal, well known to most boaters. The device can be checked any time for serviceability if shielded from view.



Note: An ordinary flashlight is not acceptable since it must be manually flashed and does not normally produce enough candle power.

Helpful Hints

The operator is responsible for the boat and the persons on board. Remember safety is not a set of rules and regulations, safety is an attitude. Prudence and common sense will go a long way in making your outing safer and more enjoyable.

GOOD HOUSEKEEPING—There are few places where good housekeeping is more important than afloat. This includes properly stowing and securing all equipment and supplies, keeping decks and spaces clean and free from clutter and trash, performing safety checks and required maintenance on a regular schedule and ensuring that all repairs are properly made.

TOOLS AND SPARE PARTS—Carry a few tools and some spare parts and learn how to make minor repairs. A great many rescue cases are caused by minor breakdowns which the operator should have been able to repair.

FUEL MANAGEMENT—Use the "One-third rule" in fuel management. Use one-third of the fuel to go, one-third to get back and keep one-third in reserve.

ALCOHOL AND DRUGS—Alcohol and other drugs reduce judgment and the ability to react. Futhermore, sun, wind, vibration and noise are very fatiguing, increasing the debilitating effects of alcohol and drugs.

FLOAT PLAN—By telling someone where you are going and when you will be back, what your boat looks like and other identifying information you will make finding your boat much easier, should the need arise.

Meter—Feet Conversions

1M = 3'3"	6M = 19'8"	11M = 36'1"	16M = 52'6"
2M = 6' 7"	7M = 22'10"	12M = 39'4"	17M = 55'9"
3M = 9'10"	8M = 26'4"	13M = 42'8"	18M = 59'
4M = 13'1"	9M = 29'6"	14M = 45'11"	19M = 62'4"
5M = 16'5"	10M = 32'10"	15M = 49'2"	20M = 65'7"

Conversions Rounded to the Nearest Inch

For more information on Boating Safety, contact your local State Boating Official or, Director of Auxiliary.

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